United Nations E/2013/60

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
3 May 2013

Original: English

Substantive session of 2013
Geneva, 1-26 July 2013
Item 7 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Coordination, programme and other questions: reports of coordination bodies

Annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2012

Summary

The present report provides an overview of major developments in inter-agency cooperation within the framework of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) in 2012. The report highlights the key activities of CEB in fostering a coherent approach on policy, operational, and management matters to enhance United Nations system-wide coordination in support of the coordinating role of intergovernmental bodies. The report provides information on efforts to enhance coherence and coordination on system-wide preparation and follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits, operational activities of the United Nations system and administrative and management issues of system-wide concern. The report also highlights coordination activities between CEB and other jointly financed bodies.

* E/2013/100.

13-32271 (E) 310513

Please recycle

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	3
II.	Ensuring system-wide coherence on programme issues	4
	A. System-wide preparation and follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits	4
	B. Strengthening policy coherence and coordination	6
III.	United Nations development system working together	9
	A. Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of United Nations operational activities for development	9
	B. Strengthening coordination at the country level	9
IV.	Advancing system-wide coordination on management issues	12
	A. Harmonization and simplification of business practices	12
	B. International Public Sector Accounting Standards	15
V.	Improving transparency and accountability	16
VI.	Coordination between the Chief Executives Board and other jointly financed bodies	17
VII.	Conclusions	18
Annex		
	Summary of the status of implementation of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the work of its fifty-second session (A/67/16)	19

I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to resolution 2008 (LX) of the Economic and Social Council, the present report provides an overview of the annual work of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). It also responds to the request by the General Assembly, in paragraph 4 (b) of its resolution 64/289 on system-wide coherence, to include appropriate information on the work of the Board in its annual overview report to the Economic and Social Council, which is also studied by the Committee for Programme and Coordination, in order to promote more effective dialogue. The report covers the year 2012, aligning the practice of CEB with that of the Joint Inspection Unit and the International Civil Service Commission in covering its work during the course of the previous calendar year.

2. In response to General Assembly resolution 67/236, in which the Assembly endorsed the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the work of its fifty-second session (A/67/16), the annual overview report highlights major activities carried out under the aegis of CEB to enhance United Nations system-wide coherence and coordination in support of and in conformity with intergovernmental mandates.

3. In resolution 67/236, the General Assembly also stressed the importance of dialogue and interaction between the secretariat of CEB and Member States. Throughout the year, exchanges with Member States have been promoted through formal and informal briefings by the Secretary of CEB to the Economic and Social Council and the Committee for Programme and Coordination as well as informational briefings to Member States by the leadership of the CEB subsidiary bodies on progress on major initiatives, including the Secretary-General's Ocean Compact and the harmonization and simplification of business practices. To improve transparency and accountability and enhance the quality and quantity of information available to Member States, the CEB secretariat developed and launched a revised CEB website (www.unsceb.org), which presents information on the work of CEB and its subsidiary bodies, including full reports of their semi-annual meetings as well as financial statistics and human resource data of the United Nations system. Additional information on the work of the United Nations Development Group can be found at www.undg.org.

4. During 2012, CEB deepened its efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations system by fostering coherence and coordination in response to mandates by Member States. CEB, through the High-level Committee on Programmes, addressed issues related to the acceleration of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, the rule of law, and demographic dynamics with a particular focus on population concerns and international migration and development. The High-level Committee on Programmes also followed up on the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, reviewed progress in the work of UN-Energy, UN-Water and UN-Oceans and intensified its work on climate change through the CEB Climate Change Action Framework. Through the High-level Committee on Management, CEB addressed key administrative issues of system-wide concern and took additional steps to extend the harmonization and simplification of business practices in areas of procurement, financial management, information and communications technology, human resources and safety and security of staff. Through the United Nations Development Group, CEB supported the optimal

functioning of the resident coordinator system, and enhanced the responsiveness of United Nations activities to national priorities, strategies and systems.

5. In 2012, CEB welcomed the following members: Ertharin Cousin, Executive Director of the Word Food Programme; Guy Ryder, Director-General of the International Labour Organization; Bishar Hussein, Director-General of the Universal Postal Union; and Jim Kim, President of the World Bank.

6. CEB also selected Francis Gurry, Director-General of the World Intellectual Property Organization, for a two-year term as Chair of the High-level Committee on Management and renewed the term of Achim Steiner as Chair of the High-level Committee on Programmes.

II. Ensuring system-wide coherence on programme issues

A. System-wide preparation and follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits

7. Responding to calls by the General Assembly for system-wide coordination in the preparation and follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits, CEB through its subsidiary machinery, consistently develops joint contributions as inputs to those meetings and systematically promotes collaboration and coherence in follow-up actions by the United Nations system.

1. Millennium Summit

8. Agencies across the United Nations system support Member States in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and CEB has worked to ensure a coordinated United Nations system approach in the follow-up to the Millennium Summit since 2000.

9. To advance and accelerate the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, the General Assembly adopted a resolution entitled "Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals" (resolution 65/1). This global plan of action for reaching the Goals reaffirmed the role of the United Nations system in supporting Member States to advance development in a coherent, coordinated and effective manner.

10. At its November 2012 session, CEB, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, agreed to include a review of the implementation of Millennium Development Goals at the country level as part of its semi-annual meetings, building on existing mechanisms such as the Acceleration Framework. Developed by the United Nations Development Programme in collaboration with United Nations system agencies, the Acceleration Framework responds to calls from Member States for support in the design and implementation of national strategies aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals (see General Assembly resolution 65/1, para. 36). The Framework was endorsed by CEB, through the United Nations Development Group, at its second regular meeting of 2010 as a way to help countries accelerate progress towards identified Millennium Development Goals targets. It seeks to assist countries in the development of multi-stakeholder action plans to improve the impact of existing interventions. The action plans are endorsed and led by the Governments to guide domestic initiatives, as well as those carried out by

development partners and other stakeholders. In response to country demands, the United Nations Development Group has been supporting the development of the frameworks in approximately 40 countries between 2010 and 2012.

11. By including a review of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals at its sessions, CEB further strengthens United Nations system-wide support to the implementation of these country-owned acceleration action plans by ensuring a coordinated approach to the technical and operational expertise of the United Nations system. It also serves as a concrete contribution in support of global efforts to achieve the Goals by the 2015 deadline.

2. United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

12. In paragraph 27 of its resolution 64/236 on the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the General Assembly called upon the United Nations system, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, to ensure inter-agency coherence and participation in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and its preparatory process. CEB, in successive sessions, reflected on the contribution of the United Nations system to the preparations of the Conference and considered elements of a future global sustainable development agenda in the context of preparations for the post-2015 development framework.

13. On the basis of work undertaken by the High-level Committee on Programmes, CEB supported intergovernmental preparations for the Conference by issuing a joint preambular statement in November 2011 as a "Common statement on the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development". The statement signalled the collective readiness of the organizations of the United Nations system to "support the world's nations and peoples to make sustainable development a reality." In addition, CEB prepared, in April 2012, a "CEB joint statement to Rio+20" as an appeal to the international community to take decisive action in support of a forward-looking and robust framework for sustainable development. At the Conference itself, the Secretary-General hosted a high-level side event on the theme "United Nations system: together for the future we want", which brought together the leaders of 20 United Nations system organizations in an interactive dialogue to highlight the contribution of the United Nations system in further advancing sustainable development policies and practices.

14. In the outcome document of the Conference, entitled "The future we want" (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex), world leaders called for a strengthening of United Nations system-wide coherence and coordination in support of sustainable development. They also called for the formulation of a sustainable development framework that would be coherent and coordinated with the process towards a post-2015 development agenda.

15. A tiered inter-agency structure has been established by the Secretary-General, through which the United Nations system works together to ensure policy coherence, appropriate stakeholder consultations and the pooling of both internal and external expertise to ensure appropriate support to intergovernmental consultation processes towards a post-2015 development agenda, with sustainable development at its core.

16. The High-level Committee on Programmes addressed the issue of sustainable development in the context of preparations for the post-2015 development agenda at its second session in 2012. The Committee reflected on the challenge to foster coherence and coordination among the various processes and the need for convergence and integration of the different dimensions of development during its retreat held in November 2012. The Committee concluded that greater cooperation and collaboration among United Nations organizations on sectoral, technical and programmatic issues was needed in order for Member States to fully benefit from the combination of system-wide specialized knowledge and operational expertise. Highlighting the linkages and synergies among different sustainable development issues was also seen as an important component of a coherent United Nations system approach.

17. Seeking to assist Member States in their efforts to build a coherent post-2015 development agenda, the United Nations Development Group initiated a process of wide-ranging consultations to help inform the work of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the deliberations of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. The initiative consists of three major elements: (a) supporting national dialogues on post-2015 led by United Nations country teams in collaboration with Governments, civil society and other partners; (b) global thematic consultations on a range of topics; and (c) a social media outreach programme.

3. High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the rule of law at the national and international levels

18. On 24 September 2012, the General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels (resolution 67/1).

19. In the Declaration, the General Assembly reaffirmed Member States' commitment to the rule of law and asserted that the rule of law applied to all States equally, and to international organizations, including the United Nations and its principal organs, and that respect for and promotion of the rule of law and justice should guide all of their activities and accord predictability and legitimacy to their actions. The Assembly also recognized the work being undertaken by organizations of the United Nations system and called for greater coordination and coherence in these efforts, including integration of the rule of law in the post-2015 development agenda.

20. As acknowledged in the Declaration, the rule of law applies to all States and international organizations equally, including the United Nations, and respect for and promotion of the rule of law and justice should guide all of their activities and accord predictability and legitimacy to their actions (ibid., para. 2). In furtherance of the Declaration, and in recognition of the fundamental importance of the rule of law to peace and security, development and human rights, the Secretary-General decided to mainstream the rule of law in the work of the United Nations. At its second regular session in 2012, CEB agreed to support the Secretary-General in this initiative.

B. Strengthening policy coherence and coordination

21. Policy coherence among the organizations of the decentralized United Nations system of specialized expertise and operational experience is a key success factor for

increasing efficiency and improving development outcomes. Advancing policy coherence and programmatic coordination is a key function of CEB, which is systematically carried out by the High-level Committee on Programmes on behalf of the Board.

1. Demographic dynamics

22. With the recent passage of the 7 billion world population milestone, the challenges and opportunities brought about by population dynamics and demographic transformation have received heightened attention. In 2012, CEB enhanced its efforts in supporting Member States to address changing population patterns and their implications for poverty eradication and sustainable development. In response to General Assembly resolution 65/234 on the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014, CEB reflected on the issue of population dynamics and affirmed that addressing the variety of population challenges required a joint effort by all stakeholders. CEB noted the importance of increasing the effectiveness of the United Nations system in assisting countries to address these challenges, which impact on several aspects of sustainable development and are recognized as a cross-cutting issue in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

23. On behalf of CEB, the High-level Committee on Programmes, at its session in October 2012, reviewed and approved the proposal for the establishment of an ad hoc working group on "The world at 7 billion and beyond". The primary goal of the work is to make ensure that population concerns become a systematic and integral analytical and programmatic lens through which the United Nations entities see their ongoing normative and operational work. The Ad Hoc Working Group is developing a set of tools and best practices that may help agencies in the integration of population dynamics in their work at different levels, including global strategic planning and policies, country programming and project-level activities.

2. International migration and development

24. Since the holding of the first high-level dialogue on international migration and development by the General Assembly in 2006, attention to the issue of international migration and development has grown. Pursuant to its resolutions 63/225 and 65/170 on the issue of international migration and development, in which the Assembly encouraged a balanced, coherent and comprehensive approach to international migration and development and invited relevant organizations of the United Nations system to provide input to the high-level dialogue on International Migration and Development, to be held by Assembly in 2013, CEB took up the issue at successive sessions in 2012. The Board asked the United Nations Population Fund and the International Organization for Migration, in collaboration with the Global Migration Group, to lead an inter-agency consultation process to prepare an analysis of key gaps and challenges in leveraging migration for development, as well as to draft proposed recommendations and outcomes on migration as an input to the high-level dialogue.

3. Climate change

25. Climate change continues to be among the key challenges facing the international community. Responding to the relevant provision in the Cancun

Agreements (FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.16), CEB, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, has been working actively to enhance inter-agency collaboration on climate change. The issue continued to feature high on the agenda of the High-level Committee on Programmes in 2012.

26. The High-level Committee on Programmes Working Group on Climate Change intensified its work to ensure United Nations system-wide coordination and coherence on climate change-related activities in the context of the CEB Climate Change Action Framework. In 2012, CEB renewed the mandate of the Working Group for another two-year term to carry forward its work in strengthening strategic, programmatic and operational coherence of the United Nations system in support of efforts by Member States to address climate change issues.

27. In 2012, the High-level Committee on Programmes, under the auspices of the Working Group on Climate Change, advanced collaboration on climate change activities through a number of joint programmatic inter-agency initiatives, including the Global Framework for Climate Services, the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD), the One United Nations Training Service Platform on Climate Change and climate-smart agriculture. In addition, a new initiative was launched on integrated spatial data for climate adaptation planning, which seeks to establish a common spatial data framework for vulnerability analysis and adaptation planning by linking a wide range of relevant data using geographic information systems.

28. The sharing of technical and operational information, knowledge and expertise is an important activity of the United Nations system in support of country implementation of climate commitments and for maximizing impact at the national, regional and global levels. The United Nations system contributed to the eighteenth session of the Conference of Parties of the United Nations Climate Change Conference, held in Doha, in November and December 2012, by holding a high-level CEB side event co-hosted by the Secretary-General and the Government of Qatar. The event, which focused on the topic "Sustainable solutions for climate action: food security in dry lands under a changing climate", fostered a dialogue among the host country, parties to the Convention, civil society and United Nations system leaders in demonstrating the collective capacity of the United Nations system to support countries in the implementation of climate action. In addition, United Nations system organizations prepared 24 joint side events on a broad range of topics, which showcased the combined expertise and complementary experience of the United Nations system by highlighting operational synergies and institutional partnerships in implementing intergovernmental climate mandates.

4. Advancing coherence in thematic clusters

29. During the reporting period, CEB reviewed progress in the work of the thematic networks UN-Energy, UN-Water and UN-Oceans. In 2012, all three inter-agency bodies prepared substantive contributions to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and its preparatory process, including by preparing a number of flagship reports and joint thematic publications on key issues related to water, energy and oceans.

30. In the outcome document of the Conference, world leaders recognized the critical importance of water, energy and oceans for sustainable development and

affirmed Member States' commitment to address existing implementation gaps and emerging challenges related to those issues. They also underscored the need for United Nations system-wide coherence and coordination in the implementation of sustainable development measures and actions and, in this context, reinforced cooperative efforts under existing inter-agency mechanisms (see General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex, para. 78).

31. UN-Water supports United Nations system coordination on water-related initiatives. In follow-up to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, it organized thematic, multi-stakeholder consultations on water-related issues as a contribution to the preparations for the post-2015 development agenda and the formulation of sustainable development goals. UN-Energy brings organizations of the United Nations system together by focusing on an integrated approach between energy and other important sustainable development factors. In 2012, UN-Oceans contributed to the development of the Secretary-General's Oceans Compact, which sets out a strategic vision for the United Nations system to deliver on its ocean-related mandates in a more coherent and effective manner and provides a platform for all stakeholders to collaborate and accelerate progress in the achievement of the common goal of "Healthy oceans for prosperity". Cooperation between UN-Water, UN-Energy and UN-Oceans continues to grow. The International Year of Water Cooperation in 2013 and the 2014 World Water Day campaign on the theme "Water and energy" will provide opportunities to further advance collaboration.

III. United Nations development system working together

A. Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of United Nations operational activities for development

32. In preparation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of United Nations operational activities for development, the United Nations Development Group worked in close collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat to ensure that the deliberations of Member States were thoroughly informed by solid evidence and the collective advice of the United Nations development system. To this effect, the Group supported the gathering of evidence of global progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/208 at the country level, collectively informed the analytical preparations of the reports of the Secretary-General (A/67/93-E/2012/79 and A/67/320-E/2012/89), and provided technical advice upon request by Member States on the functioning of the resident coordinator system.

B. Strengthening coordination at the country level

1. United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks

33. In response to General Assembly resolution 62/208, in which the Assembly called for an integrated, coherent and coordinated approach to United Nations assistance at the country level, the United Nations Development Group continued to provide targeted support to country preparations of United Nations Development

Assistance Frameworks. With the support of regional United Nations Development Group teams, new Frameworks were rolled out in 15 countries in 2012.

34. The United Nations Development Group continued to make a significant investment to build the capacity of United Nations country teams in support of country efforts to design and implement high-quality United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks. In cooperation with the United Nations System Staff College, the Group supported 13 strategic planning retreats, which brought together Governments, civil society, and United Nations country teams to review the major national development challenges, identify the comparative advantage of the country teams, and agree on priority outcomes for the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks. Recent survey data from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs shows that 92 per cent of Governments agree that the introduction of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework has ensured close alignment of the Organization with national plans and strategies.

35. In resolution 62/208, the General Assembly called upon the United Nations development system to pursue gender equality and the empowerment of women in their country programmes, planning instruments and sector-wide programmes and to articulate specific country-level goals and targets in this field in accordance with national development strategies. To this effect, the United Nations Development Group agreed on common principles and standards for gender equality markers and financing for gender equality and tracking systems. The Group issued guidance on gender equality marker systems to all United Nations country teams, which will guide the development of an effective and coherent approach for tracking resources that support the achievement of gender equality results, and will allow system-wide reporting on funds contributing to the promotion of gender equality.

2. Management and accountability system

36. In response to General Assembly resolution 62/208 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2011/7, the United Nations Development Group continued to ensure that the functioning of the resident coordinator is participatory, collegial and accountable. The Group assessed progress in the implementation of the management and accountability system and actions taken by the funds, programmes and specialized agencies in response to their commitments in the management and accountability system implementation plan as well as the United Nations Development Group management response to the independent review of the management and accountability system undertaken in 2011. By the end of 2012, eight organizations confirmed full implementation of the four core agreements pertaining to the issue of mutual accountability of resident coordinators and United Nations country teams, 11 agencies reported partial implementation of one or more actions and one agency reported no implementation.

37. As called for in General Assembly resolution 62/208 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2011/7, the United Nations Development Group continued to strengthen its efforts to improve the selection and training process of resident coordinators and conducted a review of the performance appraisal system for resident coordinators and United Nations country teams. A set of short- and long-term recommendations was adopted, including for the One80 competency development tool, which provides for mutual accountability between resident coordinators and United Nations country team members. The launch of the appraisal

process has been moved to earlier in the year so that resident coordinators and United Nations country teams receive more timely feedback on their performance and expectations on key planned results through structured feedback from regional United Nations Development Group teams.

3. Crisis, post-crisis and transition countries

38. In response to General Assembly resolution 62/208, significant progress has been made in developing the necessary policy frameworks to strengthen the effectiveness of United Nations operations in support of countries in transition from relief to development. The United Nations Development Group supported the review of the integrated missions planning process and contributed to the drafting of a policy on United Nations transition in the context of mission drawdown or withdrawal, with emphasis on capacity development and fostering national ownership.

39. Integrated strategic frameworks are being applied in 18 countries to foster coherence among United Nations actors towards common strategic goals. In the context of United Nations Development Assistance Framework roll-out support, the United Nations Development Group continued to prioritize support to United Nations country teams on conflict analysis, prevention and conflict-sensitive programming. The Group continued to enhance support to strengthen the strategic planning capacity of resident coordinators and United Nations country teams. This enhanced support contributed towards: (a) ensuring that United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and integrated strategic frameworks are aligned with national priorities, focused and integrating the work of peacekeeping and special political missions and United Nations country teams; (b) better programming, with an increasing number of joint programmes being undertaken with the peacekeeping and special political missions; and (c) better services provided to Governments and United Nations country teams.

4. Effective deployment of knowledge and know-how

40. In response to General Assembly resolution 62/208, the United Nations Development Group continued to strengthen system-wide knowledge management to facilitate the contribution of United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, including non-resident agencies, to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and other planning frameworks and mechanisms. In partnership with the United Nations System Staff College, the Group launched its staff rosters, which provide United Nations country teams with access to expertise from across the United Nations system for technical support and advice in a number of key substantive areas, including conflict analysis, disaster risk reduction, environmental sustainability, human rights mainstreaming, business operations, and results-based management. A revised United Nations Development Group toolkit was launched, which provides one-stop-shop access to good practices, guidance and lessons learned organized around the major areas of United Nations coordination work.

IV. Advancing system-wide coordination on management issues

A. Harmonization and simplification of business practices

41. The harmonization and simplification of business practices in the United Nations system continued to be a key priority of the Board during the reporting period, pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 62/208, 63/311 and 64/289 as well as Economic and Social Council resolution 2011/7, in which the United Nations system was encouraged to continue its efforts to harmonize and simplify business practices through common strategies and operations with a view to generating cost savings and reducing administrative and procedural burdens. Resolution 2011/7 on progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/208 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system provided a clear mandate to the United Nations system to further pursue harmonization and simplification of business practices and guided future initiatives in this area.

42. The High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group have jointly led the work undertaken in this area under the purview of CEB. Recognizing the particular importance of support to operational activities for development, coordination and collaboration between the Committee and the Group have been further enhanced. In the course of the reporting period, the two committees have continued to pursue three major objectives: to improve organizations' business models and make their management and administrative processes more coherent and compatible across the United Nations system; to generate cost efficiencies while improving the quality of delivery; and to pursue the behavioural and cultural changes that are needed to modernize the work environment.

43. In response to one of the key concerns identified in the report of the Secretary General on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/67/93-E/2012/79) and in the independent evaluation of lessons learned from "Delivering as one (see A/66/859), the High-level Committee on Management has placed emphasis on developing strong measurement systems to assess progress in its respective areas of work in terms of cost savings and efficiency gains, and has prioritized initiatives that have a strong field impact.

44. To enhance strategic planning and reporting on results of United Nations operations at the country level, the United Nations Development Group developed a new common instrument — the "business operations strategy" — to serve as a medium-term strategic framework for United Nations operations at the country level. The strategy is being piloted in seven countries to form the basis for strategic planning, resource mobilization, results and impact measurement and reporting. A suite of capacity-building measures and supporting instruments was developed to facilitate strategic prioritization and impact measurement of harmonized business operations, including instruments for simplified transaction cost analysis, cost-benefit measurement and business process analysis.

45. In addition, working closely with the United Nations Development Group, the High-level Committee on Management actively contributed to the development of the standard operating procedures which represent a key tool for operational coordination and effectiveness at the country level, and a means bringing more

coherence and better alignment between the policy directions set by headquarters and the needs and corresponding implementation at the field level.

46. The major enabling factor for the significant progress reported in the area of harmonization and simplification of business practices through the High-level Committee on Management is represented by the ad hoc resources made available through the plan of action for the harmonization and simplification of business practices in the United Nations system, as described below.

1. Procurement

47. A project on harmonization of procurement in the field, which was completed in 2012, delivered inter-agency procurement guidelines and identified elements in organizations' policies and procedures that required alignment to ensure that collaboration in the field could be optimized. This initiative enhanced United Nations system effectiveness in programme delivery by ensuring that organizations are able to collaborate in the field, and represents a direct response to paragraphs 41, 113, 119 and 121 of General Assembly resolution 62/208, paragraph 46 of resolution 64/289 and paragraphs 11 and 13 of Economic and Social Council resolution 2011/7. Furthermore, improvements in the procurement process in the field improved the ability of countries to carry out programmatic interventions, in line with paragraph 114 of Assembly resolution 62/208 and paragraph 46 of resolution 64/289. The project includes emphasis and guidance on creating baselines and measurement as requested in paragraph 12 of Council resolution 2011/7.

48. The High-level Committee on Management has made significant progress in identifying high return items for common procurement, responding to paragraph 45 of Assembly resolution 64/289 and paragraph 11 of Council resolution 2011/7. Headquarters-based collaboration for procurement of common items in Geneva and Rome has generated significant cost avoidance, and similar approaches were initiated in New York and Copenhagen in 2012. Furthermore, collaborative procurement projects on freight forwarding and freight insurance were completed, and an initiative on the joint procurement of vehicles was launched. A careful analysis of areas of high-spending for future common procurement activities has been initiated by the Procurement Network and the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Network.

49. In response to calls for increased access to United Nations system procurement for vendors from developing countries (see reports of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (A/65/16 and A/66/16)), the High-level Committee on Management launched a project to simplify vendor registration, without compromising due diligence. The project seeks to address the high number of vendors that drop out because of the complicated registration process. By simplifying the registration process, more vendors would get access to United Nations procurement contracts and competition would increase, thereby reducing costs.

2. Financial management

50. A harmonization of business practices project on treasury services, focusing on foreign exchange and launched in 2011, came to maturity in 2012 and reported over $20 million in savings from better exchange rates through collaboration, directly benefiting programmatic delivery by increasing the amount of local currency available to implement programmes. Furthermore, additional work in treasury services in the

area of common banking was initiated in late 2012. This responds to the call, in paragraph 121 of resolution 62/208 and paragraph 45 of resolution 64/289, for collaboration in areas where considerable savings can be achieved.

51. In the area of financial management, the CEB secretariat developed and launched an enhanced mechanism to collect and report on comprehensive United Nations system-wide financial statistics. This project responds to paragraphs 16 and 28 of resolution 62/208 and paragraph 41 of resolution 64/289 on improved availability of data on financial flows. Through the new CEB website (www.unsceb.org), a vast set of financial data as well as human resource data on the entire United Nations system is now available for public access.

3. Human resources and safety and security of staff

52. Responding to the call for improved harmonization in human resources (resolution 62/208, para. 121; and resolution 64/289, para. 45), the High-level Committee on Management launched a pilot project on harmonization of the recruitment process in the field. This project is expected to streamline processes and improve mobility for national and general service staff, and also responds to calls for action in the area of human resources from the lessons learned from the "Delivering as one" pilots.

53. In the area of human resources, the Committee further built on the adoption, as at 1 January 2012, of the Inter-Organization Agreement concerning Transfer, Secondment or Loan of Staff among the Organizations Applying the United Nations Common System of Salaries and Allowances, reviewing current inter-agency mobility practices to identify bottlenecks and solutions for a full implementation of the newly adopted Agreement. It also agreed to the mandatory right of return for resident coordinators to their home agencies and, to the extent possible, retention of grades received while serving as resident coordinators. Finally, the Committee started exploring the subject of non-financial incentives for resident coordinators, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Group, with a view to developing proposals for consideration by organizations.

54. To ensure that these initiatives are fully implemented, and that new tools and guidance are being used to support effective programme delivery at the country level, the Committee is continuing its collaboration with the United Nations System Staff College and the United Nations Development Group on support to operations managers in the field. This collaboration also focuses on establishing a stronger link between programmes and operations to ensure improved programmatic efficiency and effectiveness, responding to paragraph 9 of resolution 62/208.

55. The CEB secretariat also facilitates the negotiations on the agreements between organizations of the United Nations system and international associations of interpreters (International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC)) and translators (International Association of Conference Translators (AITC)). It ensures that the agreements which regulate the conditions of employment of short-term staff performing interpretation, translation and related functions are adhered to by all parties. In 2012, negotiations with AIIC and AITC took place, resulting in the finalization of two new agreements which entered into force on 1 July 2012 and 1 January 2013, respectively. Both agreements are valid for five years. The CEB secretariat remains the focal point for methodological issues. The net rates for

interpreters and translators are calculated and published by the CEB secretariat every six months.

56. Finally, through the High-level Committee on Management and under the leadership of the Department of Safety and Security of the United Nations Secretariat, CEB continued to make steady progress on issues relating to staff safety and security with the active engagement of all members of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network. In the course of 2012, the Committee endorsed a series of new and updated policies on road safety, arrest and detention, close protection, hostage incident management, relations with the host country on security, fire safety, the use of armed private security companies (and the guidelines, model contract and statement of works), special events, security training and certification, improvised explosive devices, security of United Nations premises, and boards of inquiry.

4. Information and communications technology

57. Agencies of the United Nations system continue to work towards the harmonization of ICT services, at both the country and headquarters levels. Analysis performed as part of the report of the Secretary-General on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (A/67/93-E/2012/79) indicates that shared ICT infrastructure introduced into several programme countries has begun to show results in terms of efficiencies. In 2012 the ICT Network performed a further analysis of the technology requirements of country teams and determined that additional benefits could be realized by broadening the focus of technology support to country teams from just infrastructure to also include business process analysis. While only in the early stages, this broader approach to the application of ICT promises to increase the efficiency of country teams.

58. While the application of information and communication technology solutions can offer organizations increased productivity and efficiencies, in a more inter-connected world these same technologies present information security challenges, and in 2012 the United Nations system ICT community agreed to work together to improve its ability to prevent and respond to information security incidents. Recognizing that individuals within an organization represent the weakest link in the security chain, the ICT Network has begun to develop a common syllabus for training staff members to recognize the most common threats and ways to avoid them. In addition, United Nations agencies acknowledge that monitoring and responding to information security incidents can be more efficient through a joint effort and, in 2012, agreed to create a shared system-wide facility to perform some of the basic information security monitoring functions, allowing agencies to respond more quickly and effectively to these events.

B. International Public Sector Accounting Standards

59. The adoption of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) was recommended by the High-level Committee on Management to improve the quality, comparability and credibility of financial reporting across the United Nations system. In 2006, the General Assembly, by its resolution 60/283, approved the adoption of IPSAS by the United Nations. IPSAS are independently developed

financial reporting standards that are considered best practice for public sector entities.

60. Twenty-five organizations of the United Nations system are involved in IPSAS implementation and are at different stages of IPSAS compliance. Eleven organizations with implementation target dates ranging from 2008 to 2011 have completed their implementation successfully. Ten organizations with an implementation deadline of 2012 have achieved critical milestones to meet IPSAS compliance at year-end. Three organizations with an adoption date of 2014 have made good progress and are on track with their IPSAS implementation plan. The International Seabed Authority recently joined the United Nations system and the Task Force on Accounting Standards of the High-level Committee on Management, with a target date of 2015 for IPSAS implementation.

61. Organizations realize multiple benefits in areas of operations and financial management during and after IPSAS implementation. At the same time, there are one-time and recurring costs associated with the changes required for achieving and maintaining IPSAS compliance. The Working Focus Group established by the Task Force on Accounting Standards in early 2012 to analyse IPSAS benefits continued its analysis and expanded its scope to include a review of IPSAS-related costs. During 2012, the Task Force continued to closely monitor, discuss and report on IPSAS implementation and post-implementation issues common to United Nations system organizations. It also continued to monitor the progress of harmonization of financial reporting based on the outcomes of its Working Focus Group and the comparison of elements of the IPSAS-compliant financial statements of 11 United Nations system organizations. A model note on the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund accounting treatment and disclosure was developed to promote harmonized presentation in the financial statements across United Nations system organizations.

62. At its September 2012 meeting, the High-level Committee on Management extended the term of the system-wide IPSAS project until the end of 2015 and requested that another review be conducted before the end of 2015. The strategic orientation and activities of the project continue to be facilitation and communication, the monitoring of the IPSAS Board activities, coordination of accounting diversity and providing guidance and support, with gradually increasing emphasis on post-implementation issues.

V. Improving transparency and accountability

63. The General Assembly, most recently in its resolution 67/236, called upon CEB to increase its transparency and accountability to Member States, and the Board has responded in a variety of ways to this mandate. Interactions and dialogue between the CEB secretariat and Member States was carried out through formal presentations and informal briefings on the work of the Board by its Secretary to the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Economic and Social Council. The Chair of High-level Committee on Programmes held a series of consultations with Member States on the Secretary-General's Oceans Compact. Two informal presentations by the Vice-Chair of the High-level Committee on Management to members of the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the topic "Progress in the work of the High-level Committee on Management on efficiency, harmonization and simplification of

business practices in the United Nations system" were held in the first half of 2012, with a view to apprising Member States of the work of the Committee. United Nations system-wide perspectives on key development issues were communicated to Member States also through the holding of joint side events at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the eighteenth session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

64. In response to paragraph 4 (a) of its resolution 64/289, in which the General Assembly called upon CEB to further enhance the quantity and quality of information on the CEB website and to publish and make available to Member States the Board's inter-agency agreements and decisions, several initiatives responding directly to these requests have already been incorporated and are now available on the new CEB website. The presentation of Actions, defined as the outcomes of regular session meetings of the Board and its high-level committees, are now available in a searchable format to increase transparency. The reports of CEB mechanisms have also been made available.

65. Financial statistics and human resources data, collected from all CEB member organizations are now presented using the latest drill-down and visualization techniques, and a comprehensive directory of United Nations system organizations and online resources facilitates easy access to high-value content, regardless of where it resides within the system. There is continued comprehensive coverage of the agenda of CEB pillars, and effort has been made to facilitate access to the activities of all its mechanisms and the CEB website using an array of navigation options. Through these features and a continued emphasis on the value of up-to-date content, the website continues to serve the coordination and knowledge sharing needs of its mechanism members as well as Member States and the general public.

VI. Coordination between the Chief Executives Board and other jointly financed bodies

66. Member States have consistently called for continuous cooperation among the jointly financed bodies (see General Assembly resolutions 64/262 and 65/270 and the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (A/66/16)), and in 2012 the Board and its secretariat have responded in substantial ways through contributions to the processes of both the International Civil Service Commission and the Joint Inspection Unit.

67. CEB and the International Civil Service Commission have a long history of collaboration, with the Commission and the Human Resources Network of the High-level Committee on Management participating meaningfully in each other's sessions. In 2012, several issues under consideration by the Commission included contributions from CEB. For example, as part of its review of the level of the education grant, the Commission considered proposals developed by the Human Resource Network and presented by the CEB secretariat. In addition, during its consideration of the issue of the mandatory age of separation, the Commission utilized a study carried out by a working group convened by the Committee.

68. As with the International Civil Service Commission, the Joint Inspection Unit and CEB continue to strengthen their collaboration, especially in the light of the request by Member States to the Unit to increase its consideration of issues of a

system-wide nature. To facilitate the preparation of these reports, and in response to paragraph 12 of General Assembly resolution 66/259, the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, invited the executive heads of participating organizations to facilitate the work of the Unit by accelerating their comments on the reports and recommendations of the Unit so that reports are followed up in a timely manner.

69. During the preparation of its reports, the Joint Inspection Unit has been invited to interact with the mechanisms of CEB. For example, the High-level Committee on Management, though its Human Resources Network, supported the data collection and provided comments on the drafts of two relevant reports, "Management of sick leave in the United Nations system" (A/67/337) and on "Staff recruitment in United Nations system organizations: a comparative analysis and benchmarking framework" (JIU/REP/2012/4), and the Network supported the efforts of the Unit on their report of ICT governance. In addition, the High-level Committee on Programmes invited the Unit to join its twenty-fourth session for discussions on UN-Oceans, given that the Unit had recently concluded its evaluation report of the mechanism.

70. Finally, as has been the case in previous years, CEB engaged in comprehensive exercise to assist the Joint Inspection Unit with the identification of relevant topics of system-wide impact for the programme of work of the Unit.

VII. Conclusions

71. In 2012, CEB, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, has made further progress in taking effective and coordinated action on a wide range of programmatic, management and operational issues in support of intergovernmental mandates to ensure that the United Nations system collaborates closely and effectively on issues of system-wide concern. Acting on its mandate to enhance United Nations system coordination and coherence in support of and conformity with intergovernmental mandates, CEB bolstered its efforts to support countries in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and strengthened United Nations system collaboration around sustainable development issues. The Board also advanced coordination in the area of harmonization and simplification of business practices at both the country and global levels.

72. Dialogue and interaction between CEB and Member States increased in 2012 through a series of briefings and presentation by the Secretary of CEB and the leadership of the High-level Committee on Programmes and the High-level Committee on Management. The transparency and accountability of CEB to Member States was further enhanced by the development of a revised CEB website. CEB also continued its cooperation with other jointly financed coordination bodies, in particular with the Joint Inspection Unit and the International Civil Service Commission, and strengthened its cooperation with those bodies on issues of common concern.

73. Looking ahead, calls by Member States for policy coherence and effective United Nations system-wide preparation and follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits are expected to continue to guide the work of CEB in 2013. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review requires a coherent and coordinated response by the United Nations system and provides important directives to CEB and its subsidiary bodies for follow-up. In addition, CEB is committed to further strengthening dialogue and interaction with Member States and to continuing cooperation with other jointly financed bodies.

Annex

Summary of the status of implementation of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the work of its fifty-second session (A/67/16)

Conclusions and recommendations	*Status of implementation*
The Committee recommended that the General Assembly bring to the attention of the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, the need for the Board to act in accordance with its mandate of enhancing system-wide coordination and in conformity with the intergovernmental mandates of its member organizations (para. 459).	CEB acted on the basis of its mandate to support and reinforce the coordinating role of intergovernmental bodies by harnessing synergies and complementarities among the organizations of the United Nations system in various programmatic, operational and management areas, including preparation and follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits, enhancing system-wide policy coherence, harmonization and simplification of business practices, the safety and security of staff and the optimal functioning of the resident coordinator system, and ensuring the responsiveness of United Nations activities to national priorities, strategies and systems.
The Committee noted with concern the implementation of activities or initiatives relating to subjects that are still under consideration by Member States. The Committee reiterated the need for the General Assembly to request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to ensure that activities and initiatives were in line with intergovernmental mandates (para. 460).	CEB activities and initiatives were undertaken in accordance with intergovernmental mandates and decision that call for a coordinated system-wide response. Key legislative mandates for CEB and its subsidiary bodies are derived, inter alia, from General Assembly resolutions 62/208, 63/311, 63/225, 64/289, 64/262, 65/1, 65/270, 65/170, 65/234, 66/288, 67/1, Economic and Social Council resolution 2011/17, and the Cancun Agreements: Outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.16).
The Committee recommended that the General Assembly bring to the attention of the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, the need to take actions aimed at fostering dialogue between CEB and Member States and to further improve the Board's transparency and accountability to Member States (para. 461).	Dialogue between CEB and Member States has been promoted through formal and informal briefings by the Secretary of CEB to the Economic and Social Council and the Committee for Programme and Coordination as well as informational briefing by the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the CEB subsidiary bodies. Transparency and accountability has been improved by developing and launching a new CEB website that contains user-friendly and up-to-date information on the work of CEB.

Conclusions and recommendations	*Status of implementation*
The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to improve the transparency of the report of CEB, by including a summary of the status of implementation of the recommendations approved by the Assembly (para. 462).	The summary of the status of implementation of the recommendations approved by the General Assembly is contained in the annex to the present annual overview report of CEB.
The Committee recommended that the General Assembly bring to the attention of the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, that the Board should take into account the priorities of the Organization as determined by Member States, when deciding on mainstreaming issues (para. 463).	The priorities of the organizations as determined by Member States were being taken into account by CEB in accordance with relevant resolutions and decisions, including General Assembly resolutions 65/244, 66/288, annex, and 67/1.
The Committee recommended that the General Assembly bring to the attention of the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, the need to ensure that measures or initiatives relating to system-wide coherence and the concept of "One United Nations" were in line with intergovernmental mandates (para. 464).	CEB measures and initiatives relating to system-wide coherence and the "Delivering as one" programme pilots were undertaken in accordance with intergovernmental mandates and decisions as derived, inter alia, from General Assembly resolutions 62/208, 64/289 and 67/226.
The Committee also reiterated its previous recommendations contained in its report on its forty-seventh, forty-eighth, forty-ninth, fiftieth and fifty-first sessions, in which it stated that any criteria and methodology for the comprehensive evaluation of the eight "Delivering as one" pilot projects should first be considered and approved by the General Assembly and that the United Nations support to "Delivery as one" pilot projects should not prejudice the outcome of the intergovernmental deliberations of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review at the sixty-seventh session of the Assembly (para. 465).	In response to General Assembly resolution 62/208, the independent evaluation of lessons learned from Delivering as one was undertaken in accordance with resolution 64/289. CEB support to "Delivering as one" pilot projects and the second generation of Delivering as one has been undertaken strictly in accordance with intergovernmental mandates and decisions as derived, inter alia, from resolutions 62/208, 64/289 and 67/226.